

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAIGON 05318 310736 Z

14

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

EUR-25 IO-12 DPW-01 OMB-01 AID-20 RSR-01 /140 W

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R 310631 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9431

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

S E C R E T SAIGON 5318

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI PINR VS

SUBJECT: CURRENT VC/ NVA MILITARY INTENTIONS IN MR IV

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM CAN THO MAR 30
REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO

QUOTE CAN THO 0109

SUMMARY: ARVN G-2 SOURCES AT MR IV GAVE THE REPORTING
OFFICER MARCH 29 THE FOLLOWING ESTIMATES, THE MOST SIGNI-
FICANT OF WHICH IS THAT VC/ NVA FORCES IN GVN MR IV WILL
GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO THE HONG NGU- CAI CAI AREAS DURING
THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL. MISSIONS OF SECONDARY IMPORT-
ANCE WILL BE ASSIGNED TO OTHER VC MR II AND III UNITS.

1. HONG NGU- CAI CAI. BASED ON RADIO INTERCEPTS AND
PRISONER REPORTS, THE IV CORPS ARVN G-2 ESTIMATES THE
HONG NGU- CAI CAI AREAS OF NORTHERN KIEN PHONG WILL BE
THE PRIMARY VC/ NVA TRGETS IN MR IV. IN HONG NGU, THEY
WILL SEEK TO INVEST THE AREA, DRIVE OUT RVNAF, AND SUBSE-
QUENTLY POSITON ARTILLERY AND ANTI- AIRCRAFT DEFENSES
IN SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO DENY RVNAF RE- ENTRY. THE
SUCCESSFUL SEIZURE OF HONG NGU WOULD GIVE THE PRG ITS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SAIGON 05318 310736 Z

FIRST IN- COUNTRY SUPPLY POINT IN THE DELTA. IN THE COURSE OF THE ATTACKS WHICH MAY BEGIN DURING THE NEXT WEEK, THE VC/ NVA WILL TRY TO SQUEEZE THE ICCS TEAM OUT OF HONG NGU BY ROCKET AND MORTAR BARRAGES. THE ICCS WILL BE " RE- INVITED" ONCE THE AREA IS SECURELY IN VC/ NVA HANDS. IN THE CAI CAI AREA TO THE NORTHEAST, THE VC/ NVA WILL ATTEMPT TO INCREASE THEIR CONTROL OF THE " SAMPAN ALLEY" SUPPLY ROUTE INTO DINH TUONG.

2. TO ACCOMPLISH THESE OBJECTIVES, THE VC/ NVA HAVE SET UP A PROVISIONAL DIVISION COMMAND WHICH ACCORDING TO ARVN IS CALLED THE CT-9. THIS MAY BE THE NVA 6 TH DIVISION UNDER SENIOR COLONEL DANG. THE PROVISIONAL DIVISION IS MADE UP OF THE 271, 272, AND 95- C REGIMENTS. THE 272 IS NEWCOMER, DETACHED FROM THE LOC NINH AREA IN GVN MR III IN FEBRUARY. ITS SUBORDINATE BATTALIONS INCLUDE THE K1, K2, AND K3. TWO OF THESE BATTALIONS HAVE NOW BEEN FIRMLY IDENTIFIED.

IN ADDITION TO THE CT-9, THE VC/ NVA HAVE ARTILLERY AND ARMORED VEHICLES POSITIONED NEARBY IN CAMBODIA. THE LATTER INCLUDE PERHAPS 80 PT-76 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS LOCATED ABOUT TEN KILOMETERS NORTH OF THE CAI CAI BORDER AT WT580205. THE G-2 DOES NOT BELIEVE THESE WILL BE USED FOR ANYTHING MORE THAN LIGHT BORDER PROBES.

3. TO SUPPORT THE HONG NGU- CAI CAI ATTACKS, THE DINH TUONG BASED Z-18 REGIMENT HAS BEEN TASKED WITH CUTTING ROADS IN SOUTHERN KIEN PHONG TO DIVERT THE 9 TH DIVISION AND DELAY SUPPLIES AND REINFORCEMENTS DIRECTED TOWARDS HONG NGU AND CAI CAI.

4. DINH TUONG. VC/ NVA UNITS ARE IN STANDDOWN, REFITTING AND RESUPPLYING. THEY CONDUCT ONLY LIMITED ATTACKS AGAIST RVNAF OUTPOSTS.

5. VINH BINH. VC MR III HAS DIRECTED THE WEAK D-3 REGIMENT TO HARASS THE MANG THIT CANAL. GIVEN ITS EQUIPMENT PROBLEMS, THE REGIMENT WILL NOT BE ENERGETIC.

6. CHUONG THIEN. PRINCIPAL VC/ NVA UNITS ARE PRESENTLY GATHERING IN THE TWIN RIVER AREA (CO SAU YEN) TO REFIT AND RESUPPLY PRIOR TO RENEWED ATTACKS ON RVNAF POSITIONS IN LONG MY AND KIEN THIEN DISTRICTS OF CHUONG THIEN AND PHUNG HIEP DISTRICT OF PHONG DINH.

7. KIEN GIANG. VC/ NVA FORCES ARE LAUNCHING ATTACKS AGAINST RVNAF POSITIONS IN HIEU LE DISTRICT ALONG THE PRINCIPAL VC/ NVA SOUTHWESTERN SUPPLY ROUTE. THESE ATTACKS WILL BE INTENSIFIED DURING THE COMING WEEK. IN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SAIGON 05318 310736 Z

THE HA TIEN AREA, THE E-46 REGIMENT OF THE 1 ST NVA DIVISION

HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO SEIZE THE BAI OT PENINSULA IN ORDER TO SECURE SEA SUPPLY SOUTH TO E-46 POSITIONS IN THE MOSA MOUNTAIN CLUSTER.

8. CHAU DOC. TRI TON WILL CONTINUE TO BE AN AREA OF SPORADIC VC/NVA ATTENTION, PRINCIPALLY MORTAR AND ROCKET ATTACKS. IN THE LONG RUN, VC MR III WISHES TO GAIN SECURE CONTROL OF THE SEVEN MOUNTAIN AREA IN ORDER TO OPEN SUPPLY ROUTES TO THE SOUTH AND LINES OF ATTACK INTO THE CENTRAL DELTA.

9. BAC LIEU. A FLURRY OF OUTPOST ATTACKS IS OCCURRING ALONG THE MY THANH RIVER. THE RIVER IS A TRADITIONAL SECONDARY SUPPLY ROUTE. IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS SEVEN OUTPOSTS HAVE BEEN ATTACKED AND FOUR OVERRUN. THE ATTACKS ARE PROBABLY THE HANDIWORK OF THE Z-7 BATTALION OF THE D2 REGIMENT AND THE SOC TRANG LOCAL BATTALION. FOLLOWING THE FAILURE OF THE CEASEFIRE ATTACKS, THE VC/NVA WISH TO GAIN MORE CONTROL OF MOVEMENT ALONG THE RIVER. ACCORDING TO ARVN PREDICTIONS THEY MAY TRY TO SEIZE A SHALLOW DRAFT SEA SUPPLY POINT AT THE MOUTH OF THE MY THANH RIVER.

10. COMMENT: ARVN'S ASSESSMENT OF VC/NVA INTENTIONS IN MR IV IS CONSISTENT WITH PAST REPORTING. MACV QUESTIONED THE PRESENCE OF THE 272 REGIMENT IN THE HNG NGU AREA, BUT WITH NEW INTELLIGENCE AVAILABLE TO ARVN SINCE MACV'S WITHDRAWAL FROM MR IV, THE REPORT MAY BE MORE CREDIBLE. EVEN SO, WITH BETTER THAN TWO REGIMENTS IN THE HONG NGU-CAI CAI AREA, WE DO NOT ACCORD THE VC/NVA MUCH MORE THAN INTERIM SUCCESS. THE EXACT TIMING OF ATTACKS IN THAT AREA WILL DEPEND TO A LARGE DEGREE ON HOW MR IV MANEUVERS ITS FORCES. SIGNED BARNES QUNQUOTE
BENNETT

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